

From: "David Lewis" <dlewis@savesfbay.org>
To: "Bruce Wolfe" <BWolfe@waterboards.ca.gov>, "Shin-Roei Lee" <SRLee@waterb...>
CC: "Stephen Knight" <sknight@savesfbay.org>
Date: Tuesday, January 12, 2010 9:43 AM
Subject: Two good RWC clips capturing

recent developments around DMB's project, FYI.

David Lewis
Executive Director
350 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Suite 900 | Oakland, CA | 94612
p: 510.452.9261 x102 | f: 510.452.9266 | dlewis@saveSFbay.org
<mailto:dlewis@saveSFbay.org> | saveSFbay.org
<<http://www.savesfbay.org/>> <<http://www.savesfbay.org/>>
<<http://www.savesfbay.org/>>
<<http://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay=search.summary&orgid=6449>>
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Regulatory agencies clash

San Mateo Daily Journal January 12, 2010, By Michelle Durand

A letter from the Environmental Protection Agency to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers bolsters the view that the Cargill Saltworks site in Redwood City is restorable and that any evaluation of the land should consider sea level rise.

Citing its own 2009 report, the letter, by EPA Water Division Director Alexis Strauss, tells the Army Corps both entities "should carefully consider sea level issues associated with developing areas of the Bay that are at or below current and projected sea level."

The Bay and its adjacent waters are "critically important aquatic resources that warrant special attention and protection as we proceed," the letter states.

The letter sent this month primarily chastises the corps for moving forward with a jurisdictional determination on its own, a move the EPA called "unfortunate and highly inappropriate" because it is a partner in implementing the Clean Water Act.

But the missive spends the latter half listing factors used to evaluate

the development proposal, including notice that the 2002 EPA letter which some "interested parties" are using as the agency's stance on permitting doesn't actually reflect current information about possible restoration, flood risks and mitigation. ✓

"It's welcome to see something from the EPA that specific," said David Lewis, executive director of nonprofit Save the Bay, which is opposing development.

Lewis said he takes the letter at face value but is glad it not only asserts the EPA's right to be involved but also discusses changes of the past seven years.

"I don't think climate strategy was really on the radar in 2002," Lewis said.

David Smith, vice president of regulatory affairs for DMB, said the letter - and its comments about sea level and climate change - is nothing DMB hasn't always been ready to talk about.

"We've been talking about it the whole time ... it doesn't address anything that isn't already front and center," Smith said.

In the fall, the corps was asked by Cargill developers DMB to look at its so-named 50-50 Balanced Plan which calls for 50 percent of the 1,436-acre site to be preserved for permanent open space, public recreation and tidal marsh restoration and the remaining half be developed into housing, schools, parks and retail and transit facilities.

DMB said it was proactively taking the first steps toward a federal regulatory review but Lewis dismissed the announcement as little more than an attempt to look busy while Redwood City assesses its development proposal.

The one thing both sides agree upon is if the corps has jurisdiction over the land and must issue a permit for a use change. Rather than wait for an answer, DMB jumped into the review to coincide with other environmental analyses by the state and Redwood City.

One loophole may be that DMB does not currently believe the review is legally required which leaves up in the air what happens if the review of the proposal is not in line with the company's position.

The Saltworks site was issued a permit in 1940 for salt harvesting and it has stood since. The permit is no longer necessary because DMB is looking at development and also restoration of 400 acres of new tidal marsh habitat, according to Smith.

Michelle Durand can be reached by e-mail: michelle@smdailyjournal.com or by phone: (650) 344-5200 ext. 102.

Cargill opposition grows

San Mateo Daily Journal January 12, 2010, By Bill Silverfarb

A massive development being considered for the Cargill salt flats in Redwood City has drawn sharp criticism from leaders in neighboring cities who say the project will be an environmental disaster.

Menlo Park drafted a resolution in opposition to the 12,000-unit mixed-use development and Belmont is set to discuss whether it should oppose it at its City Council meeting tonight.

The growing opposition to the project before it has been subject to environmental review, however, disappoints Redwood City Mayor Jeff Ira.

"These cities are jumping the gun. It is extremely early in the process. There will be a significant number of alternatives that come out of the EIR process, including not building at all," Ira said.

The proposed size of the project has Belmont Councilwoman Coraline Feierbach concerned about traffic impacts to Highway 101 and ultimately Ralston Avenue.

In addition to 12,000 homes, 1 million square feet of office space is also proposed for the 1,436-acre Bay property.

"Belmont is being squeezed in by urbanization on both sides," Feierbach said. Belmont also came out in opposition to development San Mateo has planned for Bay Meadows Phase II.

"That's why we moved here, to live in suburbia," Feierbach said.

Belmont Councilman Dave Warden thinks city opposition is worth looking at considering the project could bring an additional 25,000 more people to the area.

"In order of magnitude, it is 10 times bigger than Bay Meadows," Warden said. "There will be significantly more cars."

Warden has yet to take a stand himself on the development.

Cargill announced in December it purchased enough potable water to supply its preferred development plan but will not say where exactly it is or how the city will transport it to the site. Still, Feierbach is concerned the development will create a greater demand for water.

"Water rates could go up for everyone with increased demand and limited supplies," she said, adding another concern is air quality.

Belmont Mayor Christine Wozniak said taking a stand on the issue is important.

"The Cargill development in Redwood City will have a definite impact on the surrounding area. We are close enough to this massive proposed

development for it to affect our infrastructure, water, traffic, educational system (we are in the same high school and junior college districts) and other quality-of-life factors," Wozniak said in an e-mail.

In October, Menlo Park councilmembers Kelly Fergusson and Andrew Cohen introduced a resolution denouncing the development on the grounds that the Bay is a natural treasure and that development should be done closer to transit corridors, among other reasons.

Fergusson is opposed to filling the Bay to accommodate the development and hopes her council will vote to oppose it at an upcoming meeting.

"There is no room for more Bay fill development in our society," Fergusson said. "It is detrimental to fill the Bay. It is not the way to solve our problems."

Redwood City's mayor understands that a certain percentage of the population will oppose the development no matter what.

"Some will be determined to keep the land open or preserved as wetlands," Ira said. "We can't even do an infill project in the middle of the city without people getting upset."

Developer DMB Associates has plans to allocate about half the property to open space and wetland restoration, while the other half would be reserved for housing, schools and other various infrastructure.

Save the Bay, an environmental nonprofit agency, opposes even considering building on the land and contends housing should be built downtown, near the Caltrain station.

"I think clearly this is part of a trend of cities on the Peninsula increasingly raising concerns," said Save the Bay Executive Director David Lewis. "Maybe together they can knock some sense into Redwood City."

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Andree Greenberg - Two good RWC clips capturing

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To: "Bruce Wolfe" <BWolfe@waterboards.ca.gov>, "Shin-Roei Lee" <SRLee@waterboards.ca.gov>, <abreaux@waterboards.ca.gov>, "Thomas Mumley" <TMumley@waterboards.ca.gov>
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